

Allowance

1. Claims **1, 2, 5-8, 14, 17, 18, 21-24, 30, 34-37** are pending and allowed in the application. Please see the examiner's amendment and reasons for allowance below.

Examiner's Amendment

2. An examiner's amendment to the record is attached to the Office Action. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Samuel G Campbell III, Reg. 42,381 on 29 September 2008. See attached interview summary.

3. The following claims represent the claims pending in the application.

1. **(Currently Amended)** A computer implemented method for generating forecast information corresponding to an organization, comprising:
creating a forecast series comprising , using the computer, wherein
the creating the forecast series comprises a set of parameters that define attributes of forecasts that are based thereon;
identifying opportunity data corresponding to members of the organization, wherein the members of the organization are associated with positions in a hierarchy structure of the organization, wherein the hierarchy structure comprises a plurality of management levels;

associating revenue data with identified opportunity data to create at least one revenue schedule containing a plurality of entries;

providing, using the computer, a plurality of visual adjustment patterns in graphical shapes displaying a corresponding plurality of member-selectable adjustment values, wherein

selection of a visual adjustment pattern by a member of the organization results in an automatic application of the corresponding member-selected adjustment value to a member-selected entry in a revenue schedule₂ in a manner depicted by a shape of the selected visual adjustment pattern;

calculating, using the computer, forecast data associated with the forecast series and corresponding to the members of the organization using the identified opportunity data and said at least one revenue schedule;

defining visibility rules that specify the forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization that are visible to a first member of the organization having at least one subordinate member, wherein

the visibility rules are defined according to the position of the first member in the hierarchy; and

generating a forecast for the first member of the organization using the set of parameters in the forecast series and based on a forecast submitted by said at least one subordinate member who is required to provide corresponding subordinate member-level forecast to said first member, wherein

the data used for said generating the forecast for the first member is limited to forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization according to the visibility rules **and wherein** ₁

a forecast for said at least one subordinate member is automatically generated when said at least one subordinate member fails to submit a forecast prior to generation of the forecast for the first member₁

the first member of the organization is a manager, and

the visibility rules include a maximum hierarchy depth search value n

defining a search scope such that the forecast for the manager is

generated from the manager's own forecast data and from forecast data corresponding to members of the organization who are defined to be both subordinate to the manager and occupy a management level in the hierarchy that is $\leq n$ levels below a management level occupied by the manager.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
defining visibility rules that specify the forecast data that are visible to each management level of the organization; and
enabling a forecast to be generated for any management level of the organization,
wherein each forecast that is generated is based on forecast data that are visible to the management level for which that forecast corresponds as specified by the visibility rules.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the forecast series comprises parameters that define the visibility rules for forecasts that are based on the forecast series.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising:
enabling the first member to submit the forecast to a superior in the hierarchy structure,
wherein said submitting by the first member comprises associating the submitted forecast state with the forecast to be submitted to the superior; and
preventing the first member from modifying the forecast after it has been submitted.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

enabling the superior or a system administrator to unsubmit a forecast such that the member who submitted that forecast is enabled to modify the forecast, wherein said unsubmitting comprises associating one of the created forecast state and the included forecast state with the forecast.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting forecast data in a graphical format that enables a member to compare forecast data corresponding to related forecasts over time that are specified to be visible to that member.

9 - 13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for generating and presenting forecast information, comprising:

creating a forecast series comprising, using the computer, wherein

the creating the forecast series comprises a set of parameters that define attributes of forecasts that are based thereon;

identifying opportunity data corresponding to the members of an organization, wherein the members of the organization are associated with positions in a hierarchy structure of the organization, wherein and

the hierarchy structure comprises a plurality of management levels;

associating revenue data with identified opportunity data to create at least one revenue schedule containing a plurality of entries;

providing, using the computer, a plurality of visual adjustment patterns in graphical shapes displaying a corresponding plurality of member-selectable adjustment values, wherein

selection of a visual adjustment pattern by a member of the organization results in an automatic application of the corresponding member-selected adjustment value to a member-selected entry in a revenue schedule, in a manner depicted by a shape of the selected visual adjustment pattern;

calculating, using the computer, forecast data associated with the forecast series and corresponding to the members of the organization using the identified opportunity data and said at least one revenue schedule;

determining an identity of a current forecast participant who is a member of the organization;

identifying subordinate members of the organization who are subordinate to the current forecast participant based on the hierarchy structure and who are required to provide corresponding subordinate member-level forecast data to the current forecast participant;

presenting forecast data to the current forecast participant, wherein the forecast data specific to each of the one or more subordinate members is viewable by the current forecast participant; and

when the current forecast participant is a manager, generating a forecast for the current forecast participant using the set of parameters in the forecast series and based on forecasts that are submitted by one or more selected subordinate members, wherein a forecast for any selected subordinate member is automatically generated when said selected subordinate member fails to submit a forecast prior to generation of the forecast for the manager, ~~and wherein~~

a forecast for the manager is generated based on a combination of forecasts submitted by said selected subordinate members and automatically generated forecasts, and

the manager occupies at least a second level of management in the organization's hierarchy and automatically calculating forecasts for said one or more selected subordinate members who have not submitted their forecast is applied in a recursive manner from lower levels to higher levels in the organization's hierarchy.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable media storage medium on which a plurality of machine computer-executable instructions are stored that, when executed by a machine-generates computer, generate forecast information corresponding to an organization, by performing the operations of:

creating a forecast series comprising, using the computer, wherein

the creating the forecast series comprises a set of parameters that define attributes of forecasts that are based thereon;

identifying hierarchy data, defining a hierarchy structure of the organization to be entered into the machine, and comprising hierarchical positions of members of the organization, wherein the hierarchy structure comprises a plurality of management levels;

identifying opportunity data corresponding to the members of the organization to be input into the machine;

associating revenue data with identified opportunity data to create at least one revenue schedule containing a plurality of entries;

providing, using the computer, a plurality of visual adjustment patterns in graphical shapes displaying a corresponding plurality of member-selectable adjustment values, wherein

selection of a visual adjustment pattern by a member of the organization results in an automatic application of the corresponding member-selected adjustment value to a member-selected entry in a revenue schedule, in a manner depicted by a shape of the selected visual adjustment pattern;

calculating, using the computer, forecast data associated with the forecast series and corresponding to the members of the organization using the identified opportunity data and said at least one revenue schedule;

defining visibility rules that specify the forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization that are visible to a first member of the organization having at least one subordinate member, wherein

the visibility rules are defined according to the hierarchy data; and
generating a forecast for the first member of the organization using the set of parameters
in the forecast series and based on a forecast submitted by said at least one
subordinate member who is required to provide corresponding subordinate
member-level forecast to said first member, wherein
the data used for said generating the forecast for the first member is limited to
forecast data corresponding to members of the organization according to
the visibility rules ~~and wherein~~ ,
a forecast for said at least one subordinate member is automatically generated
when said at least one subordinate member fails to submit a forecast prior
to generation of the forecast for the first member,
the first member of the organization is a manager, and
the visibility rules include a maximum hierarchy depth search value n
defining a search scope such that the forecast for the manager is
generated from the manager's own forecast data and from forecast
data corresponding to members of the organization who are defined
to be both subordinate to the manager and occupy a management
level in the hierarchy that is $\leq n$ levels below a management level
occupied by the manager.

18. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim
17, wherein execution of the machine instructions further performs the operations of:
enabling visibility rules that specify the forecast data that are visible to each management
level of the organization to be entered into a computer; and
enabling a forecast to be generated for any management level of the organization,
wherein each forecast that is generated is based on forecast data that are visible to
the management level for which that forecast corresponds as specified by the
visibility rules.
19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. **(Currently Amended)** The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim 17, wherein the forecast series comprises parameters that define the visibility rules for forecasts that are based on the forecast series.

22. **(Currently Amended)** The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim 36, wherein execution of the machine instructions further performs the operations of:
enabling the first member to submit the forecast to a superior in the hierarchy, wherein
said submitting by the first member comprises associating the submitted forecast
state with the forecast to be submitted to the superior; and
preventing the first member from modifying the forecast after it has been submitted.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim 36, wherein execution of the machine instructions further perform the operation of enabling the superior or a system administrator to unsubmit a forecast such that the member who submitted that forecast is enabled to modify the forecast, wherein said unsubmitting comprises associating one of the created forecast state and the included forecast state with the forecast.

24. **(Currently Amended)** The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim 17, wherein execution of the machine instructions further perform the operation of presenting forecast data in a graphical format that enables a member to compare forecast data corresponding to related forecasts over time that are specified to be visible to that member.

25 – 29. (Cancelled)

30. **(Currently Amended)** A machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium on which a plurality of ~~machine~~ computer-executable instructions are stored that, when executed by a

machine generates computer, generate and presents forecast information corresponding to an organization, by performing the operations of:

- creating a forecast series **comprising, using the computer, wherein the creating the forecast series comprises** a set of parameters that define attributes of forecasts that are based thereon;
- identifying hierarchy data defining members of an organization and a hierarchical position of each member in a hierarchy structure comprising a plurality of management levels;
- identifying opportunity data corresponding to the members of the organization;
- associating revenue data with identified opportunity data to create at least one revenue schedule containing a plurality of entries;
- providing, **using the computer,** a plurality of visual adjustment patterns in graphical shapes displaying a corresponding plurality of member-selectable adjustment values, wherein selection of a visual adjustment pattern by a member of the organization results in an automatic application of the corresponding member-selected adjustment value to a member-selected entry in a revenue schedule, in a manner depicted by a shape of the selected visual adjustment pattern;
- calculating, **using the computer,** forecast data associated with the forecast series and corresponding to the members of the organization using the identified opportunity data and said at least one revenue schedule;
- determining an identity of a current forecast participant who is a member of the organization;
- identifying subordinate members of the organization who are subordinate to the current forecast participant based on the hierarchy data and who are required to provide corresponding subordinate member-level forecast data to the current forecast participant;
- presenting forecast data to the current forecast participant, wherein the forecast data specific to each of the one or more subordinate members is viewable by the current forecast participant; and

when the current forecast participant is a manager, generating a forecast for the current forecast participant using the set of parameters in the forecast series and based on forecasts that are submitted by one or more selected subordinate members, wherein

a forecast for any selected subordinate member is automatically generated when said selected subordinate member fails to submit a forecast prior to generation of the forecast for the manager, ~~and wherein~~

a forecast for the manager is generated based on a combination of forecasts submitted by said selected subordinate members and automatically generated forecasts, and

the manager occupies at least a second level of management in the organization's hierarchy and automatically calculating forecasts for said one or more selected subordinate members who have not submitted their forecast is applied in a recursive manner from lower levels to higher levels in the organization's hierarchy.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
associating a state with the forecast for the first member, wherein the state comprises one of the following:
a created forecast state,
an included forecast state, if the forecast is included in data of a forecast of another,
a submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the first member of the organization, and

an included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the first member of the organization and included in data of a forecast of another; modifying states associated with each forecast data corresponding to members of the organization to one of the included forecast state, if the forecast data does not currently have the submitted forecast state, and the included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast data does currently have the submitted forecast state; and enabling the first member to modify the forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization, if the forecast data does not have an associated included-as-submitted forecast state.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, further comprising: associating a state with the forecast data specific to each of the one or more subordinate members, wherein the state comprises one of a created forecast state, an included forecast state, if the forecast is included in data of a forecast of another, a submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast, and an included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast and included in data of a forecast of another; and enabling the current forecast participant to modify the forecast data based on the revenue data and opportunity data of the one or more subordinate members, if the forecast data does not have an associated submitted state or included-as-submitted state.

36. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable ~~media~~ storage medium of claim 17, wherein execution of the machine instructions further performs the operations of:

associating a state with the forecast for the first member, wherein the state comprises one of the following:

- a created forecast state,
- an included forecast state, if the forecast is included in data of a forecast of another,
- a submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast, and
- an included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast and included in data of a forecast of another;

modifying states associated with each forecast data corresponding to members of the organization to one of

- the included forecast state, if the forecast data does not currently have the submitted forecast state, and
- the included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast data does currently have the submitted forecast state; and

enabling the first member to modify the forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization, if the forecast data does not have an associated included-as-submitted forecast state.

37. **(Currently Amended)** The machine-readable ~~media storage medium~~ of claim 30, wherein execution of the machine instructions further performs the operations of:

associating a state with the forecast data specific to each of the one or more subordinate members, wherein the state comprises one of

- a created forecast state,
- an included forecast state, if the forecast is included in data of a forecast of another,
- a submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast, and

an included-as-submitted forecast state, if the forecast is submitted by the member of the organization associated with the forecast and included in data of a forecast of another; and
enabling the current forecast participant to modify the forecast data based on the revenue data or opportunity data of the one or more subordinate members, if the forecast data does not have an associated submitted state or included as submitted state.

Reasons for Allowance

6. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

As for independent **Claims 1, 14, 17 and 30**, none of the prior art of record, taken individually or in any combination, teach, inter alia, creating a forecast series that includes a set of parameters defining the forecast identifying opportunity data corresponding to members of an organization that has a hierarchy of management levels; associating revenue data with identified opportunity data to create at least one revenue schedule containing a plurality of entries; providing a plurality of visual adjustment patterns in graphical shapes displaying a corresponding plurality of member-selectable adjustment values, where selecting a visual adjustment pattern by a member of the organization results in an automatic application of the corresponding member-selected adjustment value to a member-selected entry in a revenue schedule, in a manner depicted by a shape of the selected visual adjustment pattern; calculating a forecast associated with the forecast series and

corresponding to the members of the organization using the identified opportunity data and the revenue schedule; defining visibility rules that specify the forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization that are visible to a first member of the organization having at least one subordinate member, where the visibility rules are defined according to the position of the first member in the hierarchy; and generating a forecast for the first member of the organization using the set of parameters in the forecast series and based on a forecast submitted by said at least one subordinate member who is required to provide corresponding subordinate member-level forecast to said first member, where the data used for said generating the forecast for the first member is limited to forecast data corresponding to the members of the organization according to the visibility rules and where a forecast for said at least one subordinate member is automatically generated when said at least one subordinate member fails to submit a forecast prior to generation of the forecast for the first member who is a manager, and the visibility rules include a maximum hierarchy depth search value n defining a search scope such that the forecast for the manager is generated from the manager's own forecast data and from forecast data corresponding to members of the organization who are defined to be both subordinate to the manager and occupy a management level in the hierarchy that is $\leq n$ levels below a management level occupied by the manager.

The prior art references most closely resembling the Applicant's claimed invention are Sultan (US 6,804,657) and Gozdeck et al. (U.S. 6,636,852).

Sultan teaches a method for sales forecasting based upon a pipeline of sales opportunities in the firm. Gozdeck teaches a sales force compensation tracker that tracks sales opportunities and progress against those opportunities to determine progress against that plan. While the individual references teach some of the limitations, as noted in the file history, one of ordinary skill in the art would not combine the references to teach the claimed invention as a whole with a reasonable expectation of success. The combination of the cited references do not teach the claimed limitations as a whole to render the claimed limitations obvious, i.e. to achieve a predictable result.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan G. Sterrett whose telephone number is 571-272-6881. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Beth Boswell can be reached on 571-272-6737.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JGS

9-30-08

/Jonathan G. Sterrett/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623